

Mooseheart, IL Perfin Pattern and Precancel

Reprinted with permission, *Illinois Precancel News*, May-June 1992, pp. 6-7, Earl Ratzler, Editor.

Mooseheart, IL - Type 471

As mentioned in our last issue, Bob Fifield (IPSC #690), PSS President, sent us a lengthy letter regarding the 471 type listed for Mooseheart. He mentions that the 1947 Illinois State Catalog, edited by James Howe, notes for this type: "This device of 25 subjects appear to have been cut up soon after its receipt, as most issues indicate a single subject device. It is possible that all issues prior to 1922 are imports." Bob then goes on to document meticulously the fact that portions of this device were used for post-canceling mail from Mooseheart.

Actually, Bob didn't make such a direct statement. His style is more of this nature: "It is a bird with webbed feet. It spends a lot of time in the water, floating and diving. It has a call that sounds like 'Quack-Quack'. In all probability it is not a wren."

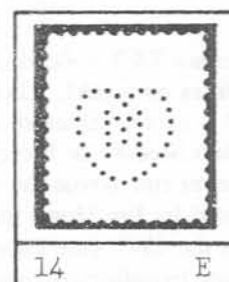
Ignoring, for the moment, whether or not Mooseheart's device should be deleted (for defacing the mails?), here's a little background.

Fraternal insurance organizations ("Friendly Societies" in England) began developing around the middle of the past century. The "Improved Order of Red Men" was organized in 1833, the "Ancient Order of United Workmen" started in 1868. By 1905 there were 148 such organizations in the U.S., boasting of a membership around five million members, insured for six-and-a-half billion dollars.

By the middle of the 1900's the leading groups were the "Fraternal Order of Eagles," 1,300,000+ members; "Loyal Order of Moose," 900,000+ members; and the "Woodmen of the World" with 400,000+ members. It is my understanding that Mooseheart, IL was set up as an orphanage and school for children of deceased members of the "Loyal Order of Moose." Perhaps nursing care may have been provided for elderly members too. Hopefully, some of our Club members might be able to fill in more of the details on Mooseheart.

In England, I vaguely remember that, even though the pubs closed at "closing time," one was able to get drinks in the hotel lounge at virtually any time. The service was extremely slow -- but who is in a hurry in one's own "castle?" In traveling around the country, I have been a guest in many places, Moose, Elks, Eagles, American Legion, VFW, etc. One thing they seemed to have in common, no matter how "dry" the community, was an actively function bar. A person is able to have his drinks and know, at the same time, that he is helping to support some noble cause. But back to stamps.

The Randall-Cummings *Catalog of Perfined Precancels of the United States* lists perfin M14 (see illustration) as having been used by the Mooseheart School & Home. The perfin has appeared on type 471 full face Harding 1½ cent, and on type 704 on both the full face Harding and the Presidential issue. I would guess that these stamps were all precanceled long after the 471 25-subject device was cut up. I wonder what that 471 imprint looks like?



Hoover I (1940 edition) lists one type for Mooseheart with large condensed letters 4½ mm high with slight serifs. A footnote mentions that "A type similar to the U-86 exists, but it has been used for post- as well as pre-canceling."

My bedraggled Hoover II (loose leaf ? edition) lists four Mooseheart types. Type 1 is the same as listed in Hoover I, Type 2 is described as 1½ mm small caps without the lines or bars. Type 3 is described as U86 (471?) appearing on the 3-cent 11x 10½, and the 1½ full face Harding. Type 4 is the U-121 (704) shown as appearing on five of the Washington bicentennials. The footnote here states "as specimens of type 1 in the 1930 catalog have been seen in use in post-cancellation, we have eliminated the type."

I do not have the 1930 edition mentioned, nor do I have the 1947 state catalog Bob mentioned. The Club's photocopy of the 471 in the Howe-Defenbach T&T (Town and Type) collection is a 1-cent from the 1920's. The perfs are not readable. For that matter, it may even be a coil.

In my T&T collection, the Mooseheart 471 appears on a perf. 11x10½ Harding profile stamps. It is nicely centered and quite readable -- like a Bob Meeske or Steve Bahnsen product. I had never run across the use of the term "imports" as used by Jim Howe in his note reported as being in the 1947 state catalog. I assume he was referring to collectors bringing in stamps for precanceling to post offices which have never had the stamps for sale. Heck, we often find the small post offices hard pressed to come up with 170 of each of the denominations we need for a 29-cent mailing, let alone worry about dollar denoms or other unusual items. Perhaps "imports" is a polite way of referring to what Dale Besom refers to as "SAPS."

I gather that Bob Fifield feels that a device which has been used for post-canceling should be deleted as a precancel device -- or at least a numeric note should be added to indicate the possibility of such a usage. In the meantime, the Illini Precancel Stamp Club will continue its program of "legitimatizing" Illinois precancel devices by having the stamps produced from these devices used on the mailing of the *Illinois Precancel News*.

Helen just commented to me that these types do not call for a (13) note to indicate philatelic usage. After all, this newsletter is not philatelic -- it is literary.